



Sky & Telescope's 3rd Annual Iceland Aurora Trip

Iceland Northern Lights Astronomy Group Itinerary: 15-21 October, 2015



Thursday, 15 October - Day 1: Arrival to Iceland – Blue Lagoon – Northern Light Inn

Once you have landed at Keflavik Airport you will proceed through immigration and then collect your luggage. There is a duty-free shop located by the baggage carousel, which you can shop at on arrival, while waiting for your luggage. Many items such as candy, snacks, and drinks are less expensive here than at local shops.

You will be met this morning by an Iceland Travel tour guide and taken to a local restaurant, Vitinn, for **breakfast**. Then, it's on to the Blue Lagoon for a soak in the relaxing, restorative aquamarine waters. This morning enjoy a visit to the famous Blue Lagoon. The Lagoon is a unique wonder of nature, a lagoon with pleasantly warm mineral-rich geothermal water in the middle of a black lava field. The high natural levels of silica and minerals give the Lagoon its rich blue color. A visit to the Blue Lagoon is both invigorating and exciting, whether one bathes there surrounded by snow in the middle of the winter or in the long summer daylight. You will be transferred to your hotel, the Northern Light Inn, just a few minutes up the road from the Blue Lagoon. Check-in, settle into your rooms, and have a short rest before enjoying a group **dinner** in the cozy restaurant. (Lunch on your own)



With any luck, nature will put on a light show for you that can be enjoyed from the restaurant or steps away from the front door of the hotel.

The Northern Lights, also known as the Aurora Borealis, are a spectacular natural phenomenon, often seen dancing around in fantastic colors across the Arctic sky. Northern Lights can be seen when certain weather conditions are fulfilled, usually during

crispy cold and very still evenings.



Friday, 16 October - Day 2: Reykjanes Peninsula

After **breakfast** you will be picked up by your tour leader for a private coach tour of the Reykjanes Peninsula. The dramatic volcanic peninsula of Reykjanes is home to several dormant volcanoes and extensive lava fields as well as many “hidden people,” we’re sure! You will visit the village of Grindavik, Gunnahyrr hot springs, Reykjanesviti Light House, and the Bridge Between Continents, where you can stand on the bridge that connects the European and North American tectonic plates. Next, on to Hvalneskirkja church and Gardsskagi Light House before returning to the Northern Light Inn. A group **dinner** will be provided at the hotel this evening. Following dinner, an astronomy presentation will be conducted by your tour leaders. (Lunch on your own)

Another night to watch and wait for the mysterious Aurora Borealis to make an appearance.



Saturday, 17 October - Day 3: South Coast - Hotel Ranga

After **breakfast** you will drive from the Reykjanes Peninsula east to the Krysuvik hot springs area and pay a visit to Kleifarvatn Lake. You will visit the black sand beaches of Stokkseyri and enjoy a group **lunch** at the lobster restaurant there or in Eyrarbakki. Travel north and east through small villages and farmlands, with the mountains and volcanoes as a backdrop. You will have views of the snow-

shrouded Hekla volcano. On to Hotel Ranga for check in and a group **dinner**. Watch the skies this evening if it’s clear!



Sunday, 18 October - Day 4: Skaftafell National Park

After **breakfast** you will leave for a long day of touring today, along the south coast with the majestic mountains soaring to the left and the ocean to the right. You pass the towering, ice-capped stratovolcano

Eyjafjallajökull, probably the most famous Icelandic volcano today. Then through the region where one of the best known of the Icelandic classical sagas, Njál's Saga, is set. Also along the way is the spectacular waterfalls Seljalandsfoss and Skogarfoss as well as Dyrhólaey, a magnificent rocky headland with sheer cliffs and a huge wave-cut gap in its ocean-facing tip. You pass the beautifully sited village of Vík, then continue east to Kirkjubæjarklaustur and Skaftafell National Park. Group **lunch** included.

Drive back to Hotel Ranga for a late group **dinner** and overnight.



Monday, 19 October - Day 5: Reykjavík

Following **breakfast** you will check out and drive west to the capital city of Reykjavík, the world's most northerly capital, where more than one-third of Iceland's population resides. Reykjavík is a modern city with a variety of restaurants, museums, galleries, and theaters. On your private city tour you will cover the city from one end to the other. Sites will include the old town center, the Parliament, the Cathedral, the harbor, the National Museum, the Pearl, and Höfði house, the

summit site of 1986. We drive past the city's Salmon River, which is an outstanding proof that Reykjavík is a pollution-free capital, and the Árbæjarsafn outdoor folk museum, which offers an interesting contrast to the modern buildings of the most recent part of Reykjavík. Drive continues past Reykjavík's largest outdoor swimming pool in Laugardalur, which is heated with water from natural hot springs under the city, as well as the Ásmundur Sveinsson Sculpture museum and Hallgrímskirkja Church (whose steeple is a Reykjavík landmark).

The tour ends at the centrally located, boutique hotel, the Reykjavík Centrum Hotel, your home for the next two nights.

This evening, you will be picked up at the hotel for a Northern Lights tour out into the countryside.



Tuesday, 20 October - Day 6: Golden Circle

Breakfast at your hotel, then a private coach tour today of the Golden Circle area, including Gullfoss, the Golden Waterfall, which is one of the most impressive waterfalls in Europe. Here we will see thousands of tons of icy water thunder majestically down in double falls into a deep canyon. Only a few minutes drive from Gullfoss is the famous

“geysir” area, which has given its name to geysers all over the world. Here you will see one of the most active geysers in the area, Strokkur, spouting up to 30 meters. A group **lunch** in the area, then onwards to Thingvellir, a remarkable geological site and the most historic site on the island. Thingvellir is the site of the world's oldest democratic parliament, founded in AD 930. Thingvellir, located by Lake Thingvallavatn, the largest lake on the island, is now a national park. The beautiful canyon running through the park is actually the meeting point of two of the Earth's tectonic plates, and the area's combination of natural phenomena and historical significance make it inseparable from the fabric of Icelandic national life. From Thingvellir we travel over Mosfellsheiði plateau back to Reykjavík.



Wednesday, 21 October - Day 7:

Morning free – transfer to Keflavik for afternoon departure

You'll have some time after **breakfast** for a final stroll in downtown Reykjavik and last-minute shopping. After check out your coach will pick you up from your hotel for the transfer to Keflavik airport in plenty of time to check-in for your flight and do some Duty Free shopping before saying “Farewell” to this fascinating country.

Included:

- Private coach and local guide for above itinerary
- 2 nights Northern Light Inn
- 2 nights Hotel Ranga, standard room
- 2 nights Reykjavik Centrum Hotel, standard room
- Breakfast buffet day of arrival
- 4 group dinners at hotels or local restaurants (3-course meal or buffet with coffee/tea/tap water)
- 3 group lunches
- Entrance fee and towel rental at Blue Lagoon

Not included:

- International airfare to/from Reykjavik
- Transfers for individual arrivals
- Beverages, snacks, and meals not specified
- Additional room nights
- Porterage at hotels
- Travel insurance (highly recommended) (We can send you a quote)
- Anything else not mentioned under “Included” above
- Room outside of normal check-in/check-out times
- Optional excursions or pre and post trips
- Tips and gratuities

REGISTER NOW!



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